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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES - SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

DATE: September 23, 1992 **FILE NO.** 092-41709-1335-057

C- ATTEMPT MURDER OF A POLICE OFFICER 664/187 PC DEPUTY INVOLVED SHOOTING

Action Taken: Active/Investigation made/One arrest/ Released on bond/ Complaint sought/

V- #1 Sgt. LOPEZ, James MH/35 [redacted]
#2 Dep. GONZALES, Edward MH/38 [redacted]
#3 Dep. HORNER, Robert MW/36 [redacted]

D/T September 17, 1992, 1320 Hours, Thursday

L- 9800 Block of Artesia Blvd, Bellflower

S- VARIEL, Eric Vincent MH/22 Bkg #3234935
Released on Bond 9-18-92

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SWORN WITNESSES:

RAMIREZ, Ruben P.
Deputy Sheriff [redacted]
H.Q. Narcotics Bureau
Lakewood Detail
(213) 866-9061

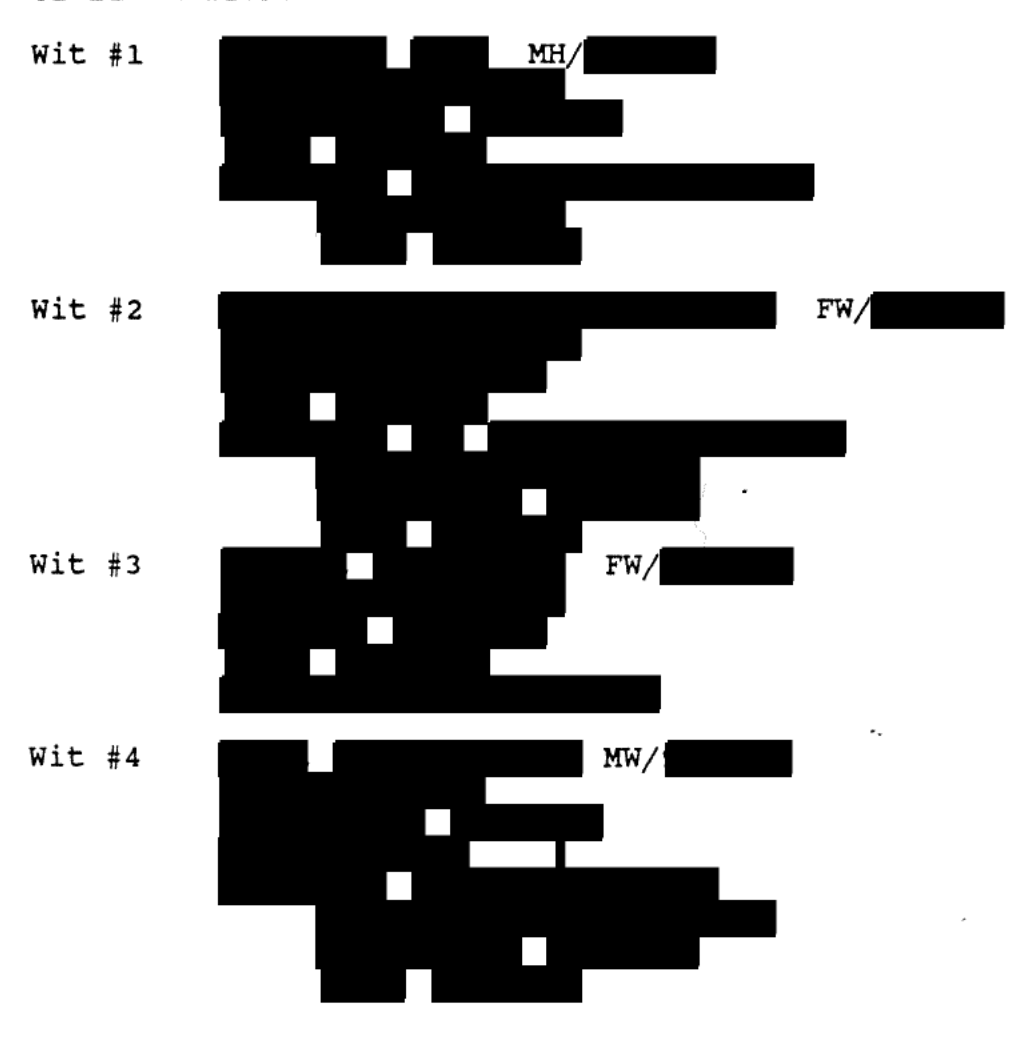
HALM, David
Deputy Sheriff [redacted]
Patrol - Lakewood Station
(213) 866-9061

FOX, Eric
Deputy Sheriff [redacted]
Patrol - Lakewood Station
(213) 866-9061

NEUMANN, William
Deputy Sheriff [redacted]
Investigator - Homicide Bureau
(213) 974-4341

TAUSON, Robert
Deputy Sheriff [redacted]
Investigator - Homicide Bureau
(213) 974-4341

CIVILIAN WITNESSES:



Wit #1 [redacted] MH/[redacted]

Wit #2 [redacted] FW/[redacted]

Wit #3 [redacted] FW/[redacted]

Wit #4 [redacted] MW/[redacted]

Witnesses identified and interviewed in a separate supplementary report submitted by homicide investigators Sears and Burks.

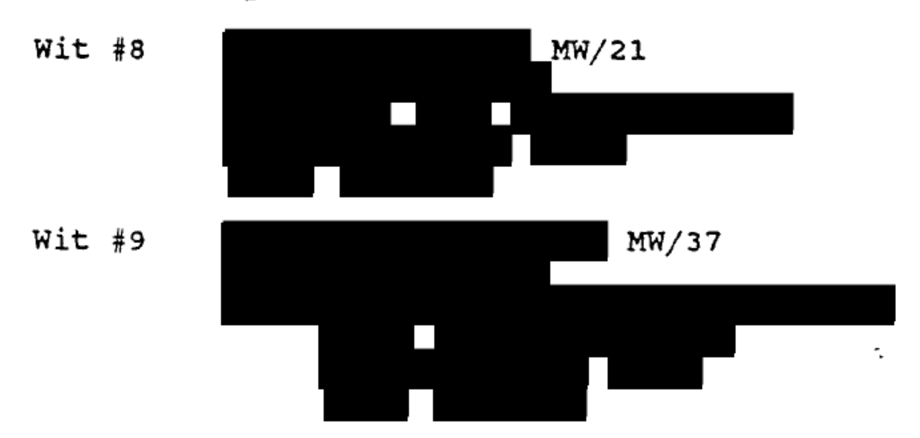
Wit #5 [redacted] MW/[redacted]



Wit #6 [redacted] MW/[redacted]

Wit #7 [redacted] MW/[redacted]

Witnesses identified and interviewed in a separate complaint report submitted by narcotics bureau under file No. 492-41735-1335-181.



Wit #8 [redacted] MW/21 [redacted]

Wit #9 [redacted] MW/37 [redacted]

On 9-17-92 at 1330 hours homicide investigators **Bill NEUMANN** and **Bob TAUSON** were dispatched to the 9800 block of East Artesia Blvd. to handle the investigation of a deputy involved shooting. Also responding to assist were homicide investigators **James SEARS** and **Gerald BURKS**.

At 1420 hours investigators Neumann and Tauson arrived and observed both east and west bound vehicle traffic on Artesia Blvd. closed with yellow crime scene tape around the shooting scene. The weather condition was clear and sunny.

The scene had the appearance of a serious traffic accident in the westbound lanes of Artesia Boulevard. A gray Ford Bronco was stopped in the No.1 westbound lane facing southbound with serious damage to the left front portion of the vehicle. Further down the street was a gray Camaro stopped in the No.2 westbound land facing westbound with minor damage to the left front bumper and fender. Then, a short distance ahead of the Camaro was a dark blue Ford pick-up truck in the No.2 lane angled into a parked Oldsmobile. About two car lengths in front of the Ford pick-up was a red Honda Accord angled into the North curb and in front of this car was a blue Toyota in the No.2 westbound lane facing eastbound.

Closer observation of the scene revealed a bullet hole in the front windshield of the gray Bronco along with several spent shell casings around the center of the street between the Bronco and the Camaro. The Ford truck had several bullet holes around the drivers compartment with some blood and paramedic debris on the ground by the driver's door. The injured driver and suspect in this investigation had been arrested and transported by ambulance to a Long Beach hospital prior to our arrival.

Homicide investigators Sears and Burks, with the assistance of Sheriff's crime lab personnel conducted an investigation of the crime scene. Supplementary reports describing their actions and findings will be submitted as a part of this file.

Homicide investigators Neumann and Tauson first contacted **Deputy Robert HORNER** who was one of the narcotics investigators present during the shooting incident. He gave homicide investigators a word picture description of what had happened.

Earlier in the morning two men came into the **Don A-Vee Jeep dealership** at 17308 Bellflower Blvd in Bellflower. They wanted to have a "Lo-Jack" alarm system installed in a new Jeep. The service assistant for the dealership accepted the job and told the two men to come back after 1700 hours to pick up the car.

As the installer was putting in the alarm system he observed what appeared to be two kilos of cocaine and a weight scale in the rear seat area of the Jeep. The dealership telephoned the Lakewood Sheriff's station and told a narcotics investigator of the observation. One Sergeant and three deputies from the Lakewood narcotic unit responded and confirmed the suspicions described by the installer at the dealership. **Deputy Ruben RAMIREZ** has submitted a detailed complaint

report under file No. 492-41735-1335-181 describing these events. This report will be a part of this file.

The narcotic deputies obtained descriptions of the two suspects. Both were Hispanic men. One was much older than the other. The younger suspect had a distinct bandage covering most of his nose. One of his - hands was also wrapped in a bandage.

The service assistant was directed to telephone the suspects and tell them the car was finished and it was ready to be picked up. The telephone number was obtained from the work order under the name of the younger suspect who gave the name of (suspect) **Eric VARIEL**. A female answered the phone call and said the Jeep would be picked up.

The narcotics team set up a surveillance in and around the Don A-Vee dealership which is on the northwest corner of Artesia and Bellflower Boulevards. The plan was to have the owner of the Jeep point out the suspect(s) to a deputy positioned inside the dealership and then let the suspect(s) take possession of the vehicle. The deputies would then make the arrest(s). It was not known to the deputies what kind of vehicle the suspect(s) would arrive in.

Less than a half hour later a blue pick-up truck was observed with two males in it driving east on the north side of the dealership. One of the two had a distinct bandage across his nose. A few minutes later the older suspect was walking into the dealership and was pointed out by the service assistant to the inside undercover deputy. This suspect has been identified as **Ronald GARCIA MH/54**. He took possession of the Jeep as planned and was arrested by deputies Ramirez and Horner without incident.
This suspect was arrested for possession of controlled substance (cocaine) for the purpose of sales, 11351 H&S, and transportation of cocaine, 11352 H&S. The arrest and follow-up narcotics investigation was handled by the Lakewood Narcotic Unit described in the complaint report submitted by Deputy Ramirez.

While Deputy Ramirez maintained control and custody of suspect Garcia, Deputy Horner went to assist the other deputies who had spotted the blue Ford pick-up truck stopped on Artesia Blvd. at the southeast entrance to the dealership. The vehicle was driven by a young male Hispanic with a bandage across his nose. No one else was in the vehicle.

As the three remaining narcotics investigators approached the suspect still inside the truck he tried to escape the arrest.

Sgt. Lopez had approached and positioned his blue Toyota eastbound in the westbound No.2 lane to block the front of the suspect's truck. Sgt. Lopez exited his vehicle wearing a Sheriff's raid jacket and pointed his 9mm pistol at the suspect while identifying himself and shouting commands of arrest at the suspect. As Sgt. Lopez, who was now on foot approached the suspect still seated in the driver's seat, the suspect put the truck in reverse gear and accelerated rapidly in reverse eastbound on Artesia against westbound traffic. Sgt. Lopez chased the truck on foot as Deputy Horner pursued the truck in his gray Camaro.

Both Lopez and Horner would witness the driver of the truck ram into the gray Bronco being driven by Deputy Gonzales as he was approaching westbound Artesia Boulevard. The impact was so severe that they both feared Deputy Gonzales had been injured. The impact stopped the truck and a single gunshot was heard. The suspect then put the truck in a forward gear, raced the motor and drove towards and struck the Camaro occupied by Deputy Horner. The truck passed the Camaro headed towards Sgt. Lopez who was still on foot.

Sgt. Lopez quickly moved out of the path of the truck as it was passing close to him and fired several shots at the passenger side of the truck. The truck suddenly slowed as the suspect slumped to one side allowing Sgt Lopez to run alongside the truck in an effort to reach inside and try to stop the vehicle. The truck ran into a parked Oldsmobile and stopped. The suspect had sustained a gunshot wound to the left side of his head and was taken into custody. He was treated by paramedics, reveived emergency treatment at Long Beach Hospital and booked into USC-med center jail ward. Deputy Gonzales was not injured in the collision.

As investigators Sears and Burks investigated the crime scene, witnesses were being interviewed by investigators Neumann and Tauson.

On 9-17-92 at 1515 hours homicide investigators interviewed **(Wit #1)** [redacted] **MH/50** at the Knights of Columbus Hall adjacent to the crime scene. This entire interview was tape recorded and will be made into a transcript as part of this file.

In brief, [redacted] told homicide investigators he was behind the Ford truck westbound on Artesia Boulevard and pulled into a parking place next to the curb in front of the Knights of Columbus Hall. This witness was in a Southern California Gas Company truck. He only saw the driver inside the truck. The suspect parked the Ford truck near the front of Chris and Pits Restaurant and the adjacent driveway leading to the Don A-Vee dealership. The restaurant is next door to the Knights of Columbus Hall.

[redacted] said he was looking down towards his lap at some paperwork he was reading when he suddenly heard and saw the Ford trucks tires squealing and smoking. He didn't see what caused the suspect to do this but the truck went past him in reverse at a high rate of speed against the westbound traffic until it struck another vehicle. [redacted] remained in his vehicle as he observed the truck come back forward and heard deputies shouting, then the sound of shots being fired. [redacted] said it looked like the truck was coming at him, but instead struck the Oldsmobile parked in front of him. When he heard the shots being fired he leaned down to seek cover inside his vehicle. The suspect was then taken into custody by Sheriff's deputies.

On 9-17-92 at 1557 hours homicide investigators interviewed **(Wit #2)** [redacted] **FW/48** at her place of employment. This entire interview was tape recorded and will be made into a transcript as part of this file.

In brief, [redacted] stated she was working [redacted] at [redacted]. in Bellflower. She was looking out the front window at the moment she observed a Ford pick-up truck strike a gray Bronco and continue westbound. She believes the truck had turned into the path of the Bronco and struck the Bronco with the right front end of the truck. As the truck drove forward she heard some shots and observed a deputy chasing the truck on foot as it continued westbound down the street.

On 9-17-92 at 1800 hours homicide investigators interviewed **(Wit #3)** [redacted] **FW/46** at Lakewood Sheriff's Station. This entire interview was tape recorded and will be made into a transcript as part of this file.

In brief, [redacted] stated she was westbound on Artesia Blvd. when she saw a pick-up truck going eastbound against traffic and being chased by Sheriff's deputies. She pulled to the curb in front of Chris and Pits Restaurant to get out of the way.

On 9-17-92 at 1940 hours homicide investigators interviewed **Deputy Ruben RAMIREZ** at Lakewood Sheriff's station. This interview was not tape recorded. Deputy Ramirez is the handling and filing deputy involving the narcotics investigation under file #492-41735-1335-181. This report describes the narcotics investigation and the arrest of **Suspect Ronald GARCIA MH/54.**

Deputy Ramirez told homicide investigators at approx. 1200 hours a telephone call to the Narcotics Unit was received from **(Wit #8)** [redacted] **MW/21.** He is [redacted] Two men had came in to have a **Lo-Jack** alarm system installed in a 1993 Renegade Jeep. Both men left with the understanding the Jeep would be ready to pick up later the same day. As the installer was putting in the alarm, 2 kilos of what looked like cocaine was found exposed on the rear seat portion inside the Jeep.

Deputy Ramirez and Deputy Horner responded and contacted informant [redacted]. He pointed out his observations to the deputies who confirmed the discovered items as a narcotic substance. This was based on the packaging, white powdery consistency, and chemical smell indicative of cocaine; and a weight scale to measure the distribution for sales.

Deputy Ramirez contacted **(Wit #9)** [redacted] **MW/37,** [redacted]. Through him the deputies obtained a description of the two suspects who left the Jeep to have the alarm installed.

A surveillance plan was initiated using Sgt. Lopez and Deputy Gonzales as additional personnel in plain clothes and undercover County vehicles. [redacted] was instructed to telephone the phone number left on the work order and tell whoever answered that the alarm was installed and the Jeep was ready to be picked up. Deputy Ramirez remained in the service department office and told [redacted] to point out the suspect(s) when they arrived to claim the Jeep.

At 1320 hours Deputy Horner came in to the service department and told Deputy Ramirez he had seen a blue pick-up truck with two men in it driving on a street just north of the dealership. One of the men had an injured nose bandaged.

A few minutes later the older suspect identified as Ronald Garcia, walked into the dealership and was pointed out by [redacted] as one of the two suspects. As soon as the suspect took possession of the Jeep by accepting the key and getting inside the Jeep, he was taken into custody by Deputy Ramirez and Deputy Horner.

Deputy Ramirez remained with the suspect in his control while Deputy Horner entered his gray Camaro to assist Sgt. Lopez and Deputy Gonzales approach the suspect in the blue pick-up truck parked on Artesia Blvd. adjacent to the Chris and Pits restaurant. Deputy Ramirez, moments later heard tires squealing and shots being fired from the area where the blue pick-up truck was last seen. Deputy Ramirez did not see or participate in the shooting incident because he was still inside the dealership maintaining control over suspect Garcia and the physical evidence. Deputy Ramirez could add nothing further and the interview was terminated.

On 9-17-92 at 2000 hours homicide investigators interviewed **(Vict #3) Deputy Robert HORNER**, at Lakewood Sheriff's station. This entire interview was tape recorded and will be made into a transcript as part of this file.

In brief, Deputy Horner stated that he was the one who received the telephone call from the Don A-Vee dealership with the information about narcotics being found in a vehicle left by two men to be serviced. The sequence of events was the same as described by Deputy Ramirez up to the point where he left Ramirez to assist in the arrest of the suspect in the waiting pick-up truck.

Using sheriff's radios, the other narcotic investigators were aware of the trucks location. Deputy Horner drove his gray Camaro from the service area to the dealership driveway adjacent to Chris and Pits restaurant on Artesia Boulevard. The truck was double parked in the westbound number 2 lane with a single male behind the steering wheel. His nose was bandaged, and he was younger than the other suspect.

Deputy Horner said he saw Sgt. Lopez approach in his blue Toyota and stop in front of the truck's path in a blocking maneuver. The front end of Sgt. Lopez's car was facing the front end of the truck. Sgt. Lopez exited his vehicle wearing a green Sheriff's raid jacket. He approached the suspect in the truck on foot with his duty weapon in hand and tried to arrest him.

The suspect suddenly put the truck in reverse and drove backwards down Artesia Blvd. against traffic until he struck the front of Deputy Gonzales's gray Bronco as he was arriving westbound. Sgt. Lopez chased the truck on foot. Deputy Horner said he also chased the truck in his Camaro until the truck crashed into the Bronco. The suspect then put the

truck into forward gear and raced forward toward Sgt. Lopez. Deputy Horner said at one point he made eye contact with the suspect as they passed each other and he yelled at the suspect he was a deputy sheriff and to stop his truck. The suspect ignored him and hit the Camaro as they passed causing minor damage to the Camaro's left front fender.

Deputy Horner said as he made a U-turn he heard gunfire and saw Sgt. Lopez running alongside the drivers door trying to reach inside the window and somehow stop the truck. Horner said he had exited his vehicle with his gun in hand but did not shoot because the suspect had slumped across the seat and Sgt. Lopez was to close to the line of fire. Instead he also chased the truck on foot which had slowed down and tried to help Sgt. Lopez stop the truck. The truck came to a stop after it struck a parked car near the front of the Knights of Columbus hall. The suspect was taken into custody without further incident. The suspect had a head wound to the left side of his head and was booked at USC Med-Center jail ward.

Deputy Horner told homicide investigators he feared for the life of Deputy Gonzales when the truck rammed the Bronco and for the life of Sgt. Lopez when the suspect drove the truck drove towards him.

On 9-17-92 at 2037 hours homicide investigators interviewed **(Vict #2) Deputy Edward GONZALES** at the Lakewood Sheriff's station. This entire interview was tape recorded and will be made into a transcript as part of this file.

Deputy Gonzales was driving the gray Bronco and had been on the perimeter of the surveillance near the dealership. He saw the truck arrive with two men in it and later heard one was in custody on the sheriff' radio. He was was driving westbound toward the location of the second suspect to assist in his arrest when the truck came directly at him in reverse and rammed him. The impact knocked him across the front seat. Deputy Gonzales fired one shot from his county issued handgun through his front windshield at the suspect. He saw the same bullet shatter the side passenger window of the truck. The suspect then sped the truck forward towards Sgt. Lopez who was still on foot and moving towards the truck. Deputy Gonzales heard some shots fired and then saw the suspect taken into custody.

Refer transcript for detailed interview.

On 9-17-92 at 2100 hours homicide investigators interviewed **(Vict #1) Sgt James LOPEZ** at the Lakewood Sheriff's station. This entire interview was tape recorded and will be made into a transcript as part of this file.

Fired several rounds from county issued handgun.
Refer transcript for detailed interview.

On 9-17-92 at 2340 hours homicide investigators responded to the jail ward at LACO USC-MED Center to interview **suspect Eric Vincent VARIEL MH/22,** BKG 3234935. This entire interview was tape recorded and will be made into a transcript as part of this file.

Investigators observed the suspect to have a cast type covering over his entire nose. It looked like a large white bandage covering his nose and was very distinct in appearance. His entire left hand, except for a thumb and two fingers, were heavily wrapped up to his wrist with a medical bandage.

The suspect was advised of his constitutional rights by Investigator Neumann which he stated he understood and waived. He was cooperative with investigators and was willing to talk with us but expressed concern over the safety of his family because of his father's drug involvement. It should be noted during the interview it was difficult for Variel to talk and for investigators to understand him due to the gun shot wound in his head. The bullet entered the left ear and lodged in his left cheek. Swelling was setting in making it painful and difficult to talk.

In brief, Variel said he injured himself when he fell at a carpentry construction site four days ago and received the injuries to his nose and hand. He has been taking pain medication for the injury which was valium and vicadome. He had taken some earlier that morning and he said it made him feel disoriented.

On this day he helped his father take a new Jeep to a dealer in Bellflower to have an alarm put in. When they got word the Jeep was ready to be picked up he went back with his father (suspect Ronald Garcia) in the truck. His father went in to claim the Jeep as he drove around the block twice, then stopped in front of the dealer to wait and see if his father got the Jeep. A blue car pulled up and a guy got out and had a gun. The windows were rolled up in the truck as the man walked toward him and couldn't hear. The man with the gun didn't have a uniform. Variel said he panicked and put the truck in reverse to get away. He remembers hitting something and then driving forward until he was shot. Then he was being treated by paramedics.

Refer transcript for detailed interview.

On 9-22-92 at 1020 hours homicide investigators interviewed **(Wit #4)** [redacted], **MW/32** at his place of employment. This interview was not tape recorded.

[redacted] told investigators he works a short distance east of the shooting scene on Artesia Boulevard. At 1320 hours on the day of the shooting he had just driven out of the business where he works and went westbound on Artesia Boulevard. He saw a truck stopped in the No.1 lane facing westbound for westbound traffic near the front of a doctor's office. The Ford Bronco was facing southeast towards the front of the truck. A gray Camaro was also facing the front of the truck in a northeast direction.

All of the vehicles were stopped. The deputy in the Camaro was wearing a sheriff's raid jacket and was yelling to the driver of the truck, "put your hands on top of your head, freeze"! [redacted] said at the same time he saw a man exit the Bronco wearing a white Don A-Vee shirt with a gun in his hand and pointing it at the truck. He didn't hear him say anything and did not see anyone else in the Bronco. The deputy from the Camaro

started walking to the drivers side of the truck. The deputy in the white shirt was now standing just off to the right of the Bronco.

[redacted] said he then saw the brake lights come on the back of the truck and the back tires start smoking. The truck accelerated rapidly forward toward the described deputies and struck the Bronco on the driver's front side. The impact spun the Bronco around so that it faced the center of the street. The deputy from the Bronco was in danger of being struck by the truck if he had he stayed where he was. This deputy had to jump out of the way of the speeding truck. Two other deputies wearing raid jacket were running eastbound towards the truck as it started to take off towards them.

The deputy from the Camaro fired at the truck as it passed his position at least six times. He could not see if the other deputy from the Bronco fired his gun. The truck slowed down after the shots were fired but continued westbound until it hit a parked car near the front of Chris and Pits restaurant.

After the truck had stopped a deputy opened the drivers door. He saw the suspect leaning across the front seat with his leg dangling out of the door. The suspect was treated by paramedics and taken into custody.

This witness could not add anything more and the interview was terminated.

The fact of this investigation is to be presented to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office.

BY: DEPUTY ROBERT TAUSON, #[redacted]
INVESTIGATOR WILLIAM NEUMANN, [redacted]
APPROVED BY: LIEUTENANT JOE BROWN
HOMICIDE BUREAU - DETECTIVE DIVISION

TAUSON